

have heard the number estimated at something like 150,000 or more. Now fail to adopt such a provision as I propose, as soon as the people of the United States, already heavily burdened with taxation, fail to support that 150,000, they will be compelled to seek labor; they must live. And will they not come among us 150,000 strong or more? And if things are to go on as they have been going on, the number may reach 300,000; and the first influx will be into the counties nearest Washington; Howard, Prince George's, Montgomery and Washington counties.

I say, Mr. President, this is one of the gravest propositions which this body will be called upon to consider and decide. The majority of this House may choose to take the responsibility of smothering this order now, and prevent it from going to the committee. I have offered it in all seriousness, that it might go to a committee in order that we might have the benefit of their views and the views of other gentlemen upon it. I do not care, however, whether it goes to a committee or not. But before this Convention adjourns this article shall be offered by way of amendment to the report of the committee on that portion of the Constitution, if I have the power to do it; and the yeas and nays shall be called upon it, so that, if the people of this State are hereafter overrun by this class of people, they may know who are responsible for it. If this State shall be overrun by thousands and thousands of these people, you will not only have brought them into competition with the white man, but you may have men getting up before the people of this State, as is now done in the Senate of the United States, where it is proposed to give to negroes in Washington city the right of suffrage; you may have the same proposition made in the State of Maryland, and made an engine of political power. I know not whether it is going to succeed or not. No, sir, the people of this State are not prepared for it now, and no man will dare now to avow any such purpose. But there is nothing like stopping such a thing at the very outset. I propose to not let these people come here. I propose not to allow parties, who may hereafter attempt to control the political destinies of this State, have that class of people in such strong numbers to work upon. If they are allowed to come here, and men, for party political purposes, succeed in giving them the elective franchise, and the white men of Maryland become virtually enslaved by the negro voting for, and supporting a particular class of white men, it will be one of my proudest memories that pending the consideration of the organic law of the State, I did what I could to preserve the rights and liberties of white men, to keep the rights and liberties of white men under the control of white men; and to keep the labor of white men at such a standard

that it could not be brought into competition with free negro labor; and to prevent the bringing down of the white man, if not to a political equality, to at least an economical level with the negro, where, in order to sustain himself and his family, he will be compelled to work upon the same terms with the negro.

I will close by saying to the gentleman from Baltimore city, (Mr. Abbott,) that he may offer what amendments he chooses to the proposition, which I offered in all seriousness. This Convention may throw it out or not, as they choose, now it is here. But this Convention, unless there shall be some rule adopted here to prevent it, will be brought to a vote upon this proposition before it adjourns.

Mr. CUSHING. I would like to enquire of the gentleman from Prince George's, (Mr. Clarke,) how he proposes to meet a difficulty which will arise under his first article, in relation to negroes which may be sent here in the United States' service, and I would also like to enquire why the provisions of this order are made to apply to mulattoes, and not to quadroons and mestees?

Mr. CLARKE. When I offer an order of this sort, I do not profess to undertake to arrange in every respect, articles of the Constitution as they should finally be adopted. As I said yesterday, to the gentleman from Howard, (Mr. Sands,) I do not profess that the orders I offer are perfectly complete; I came here to be informed; I want the committee to enlighten me if they can. I am willing to adopt any amendments that may be proper, and probably will accept any suggestion the gentleman (Mr. Cushing) may make, to except those in the service of the United States. I only want the benefit of the judgment of the committee, and the reflection of members upon the proposition. That which I have offered is something for the consideration rather than a perfect proposition, for I do not arrogate to myself the ability to offer such to this House.

Mr. CUSHING. The gentleman in the first part of his order says:

"Ordered, That the Committee on the Legislative Department be instructed to inquire into the expediency of inserting the following articles in the Constitution."

Thereby presupposing that the identical words of the proposed articles are those which he desires to have inserted in the Constitution of Maryland.

Mr. CLARKE. I disclaim any such presupposition as that.

Mr. CUSHING. While I have no suggestions to make to the gentleman by way of amendment; while I have no intention to propose any amendment myself, and do not intend to express any opinion upon the propriety or impropriety of referring this to the committee, still for the purpose of disambiguating the minds of the committee,